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SUBJECT: MOD AND UN HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE SIGN ACCORD; GOC
COMPLETES ANOTHER UNHCHR RECOMMENDATION

REF: BOGOTA 8602

Summary

¶1. On November 8, Minister of Defense Camilo Ospina Bernal and Director of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia (OHCHR) Michael Fruhling signed a cooperation agreement on human rights training for the Colombian military that meets another of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' 27 human rights recommendations for Colombia.

Recommendation on MOD Human Rights Training

¶2. OHCHR recommendation number 6 states: "The High Commissioner encourages the Minister of Defense to develop, on the basis of the results of an independent study, in a comprehensive, systematic and operational way, the training in human rights and international humanitarian law of all members of the security forces." Under the terms of the accord, the MOD will contract three international experts to assess current and future efforts to systematize training in human rights for all members of the security forces.

Embassy: MOD Already Meets Standards

¶3. In 2004, the Embassy reviewed the MOD's human rights training program and determined that it was already in full compliance with the OHCHR recommendation. Fruhling continued to insist, however, that the review of human rights training in the MOD should include a study "incorporating the theme of human rights and international humanitarian law in all of (the MOD's) instructions, orders, acts and operations...." In a statement released on November 9, the OHCHR applauded the agreement and declared the GOC in compliance.

¶4. Informal translation of the November 9 OHCHR Statement.

Begin Text:
Cooperation agreement was signed with the Ministry of Defense of Colombia
2005-11-09

The Minister of Defense, Camilo Ospina and the United Nations

High Commissioner for Human Rights, Director of the office in Colombia, Michael Fruhling, signed yesterday, November 8, a framework agreement of cooperation.

This agreement is part of the commitments acquired by the Colombian State in the Chair's Statement of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, in April of this year, as a response to one of the 27 recommendations formulated for the State in the latest reports of the High Commissioner, Mrs. Louise Arbour.

This recommendation encouraged to the "Ministry of Defense to develop, based on an independent study, in integral, systematic and operational form, the human rights and the humanitarian international law in the education of all members of the Public Force."

The study that will be developed through the agreement will include the following thematic areas:

1. Human rights and humanitarian international law education and training. Curricular application of human rights and humanitarian international law across all levels in the education of the Public Force at all levels.

2. Prevention and protection: incorporation of human rights and humanitarian international law topics into all instructions, orders, performances and operations that the Public Force develops by virtue of the constitutional mandate.

The study project execution has three phases:

1. The presentation of the confidential study to the Ministry of Defense, carried out by independent experts, about the improvements and deficiencies in the integration of the education of human rights and humanitarian international law in the Public Force.

2. The implementation of the study recommendations by the Ministry of Defense.

3. The evaluation of the implementation of the recommendations.

The project will begin next month and will conclude on December 31, 2006.

The Office welcomes the signature of this agreement, and hopes that it helps to strengthen, in an integral way, respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.

End Text.
DRUCKER